

## ***Coping with Reactions to Terrorism***

People who have seen and heard about the destruction in New York City and Washington D.C. may be impacted by these events. Generally, people's reactions are normal reactions to abnormal events. It is also normal to have no response to these terrorist events.

Stress reactions usually diminish in severity over time for most people but can become more severe as time passes. When stress responses interfere with routine daily activities, a consultation with a mental health professional can be helpful. The list below describes some of the normal reactions people have following terrorism.

Terrorism is intended to intimidate, coerce, and create fear in people. Talking about your reactions and trying some of the self-help suggestions can help with feelings of fear and the other reactions listed below.

### ***Reactions***

anger	fear	memory problems
anxiety	feeling of loss	muffled hearing muscle
confusion	feelings of inadequacy	tremors
criticism	forgetfulness	nausea
decreased sexual	frustration	nightmares
interest	grief	persistent thoughts
denial	guilt	shock
depression	headaches	sleep disturbance
difficulty concentrating	helplessness	stomach cramps
disorientation	irritability	sweating
emotional numbing	letdown	visual flashbacks
fatigue	loss of appetite	withdrawal

increased alcohol use or substance abuse  
intense concern for family members  
sense of unreality or being like a "movie"  
anger at supervisors/organization  
difficulty making decisions  
feelings of being unappreciated  
distortions in time perspective  
sense of being a bad dream  
persistent interest in the event

## ***Coping with Reactions to Terrorism***

People can take steps to help themselves, family members, and each other cope with terrorist incidents. This is a list of self-help suggestions.

1. Within the first 24 to 48 hours...periods of strenuous physical exercise alternated with periods of relaxation will alleviate some of the physical reactions to a stressful situation.
2. Structure your time by keeping busy.
3. Remind yourself that you are normal and having normal reactions. Don't label yourself as "crazy", "wacko", "weak", or unfit.
4. Talk is one of the most healing medicines. Talk to people you know care about you. People do care.
5. Be aware of numbing the pain with overuse of drugs or alcohol. Don't complicate things further with substance abuse problems.
6. Keep your life as normal as possible.
7. It is all right to spend time by yourself.
8. Help your co-workers as much as possible by sharing feelings and checking out how they're doing. (respect their feelings of not wanting to talk about the incident)
9. Do things that make you feel good.
10. Realize that those around you are also under stress and may not act or react in a manner you would normally expect.
11. Keep a journal. Writing during sleepless hours may help.
12. Don't make any big life changes, buying that Ferrari or house you've always wanted, going to Reno to get married suddenly, etc.
13. Do make as many daily decisions as possible, which will give you the feeling of control over your life.
14. Consult a mental health professional if you need assistance.

Please contact the Mobile Crisis Team at 510-644-8566 for additional information.